

Park Perspective



by Patrick Ralston.

TH Gazette 4-12-85
City Parks Superintendent
Parks & Recreation (Vc)

Curtis Gilbert Park

Community Affairs File

The Park featured this week is Curtis Gilbert Park which is located at 15th and Wabash Avenue on Terre Haute's Central Eastside. Gilbert Park's total of 3.85 acres has several mature trees throughout the park.

Gilbert Park was formerly known as Steeg Park. The name was changed to Gilbert Park in the 1950's. Curtis Gilbert (1795-1877) arrived in Terre Haute on December 24th, 1815. He became the first Postmaster at Ft. Harrison in 1818 and then the first Clerk of Vigo County in 1820. Curtis Gilbert was one of the organizers of the State Bank of Indiana which was started in what is known now as Memorial Hall. In 1845 he was named President of the Bank.

When Gilbert Park property was donated by John Beach and Mary Gilbert, her only stipulation was that the property always be maintained as a City Park.

In June 1926, a friend of Mayor Davis sent him two alligators to be placed in City Parks. It was decided that Steeg Park (Gilbert Park) was the best place to put them. The alligators were put in the fountain at the park in the fall of that year. If these alligators were put in a City Park today, there would probably be fifty lawsuits from individuals who would claim they were bitten by the alligators.

Gilbert Park over the years has seen many improvements such as the addition of restrooms, fountain, horse-shoe courts, playground equipment, landscaping, ornamental lighting, and a basketball court. In the summer of 1985 new lighting will be installed along with a plaza area. There will also be a concession stand for the park visitors. The Central Eastside Business Men's Association donated funds for development of the plaza area. Additional playground equipment will be installed by the Park Department.

Pick up your entry blank for our "Cycle Into Spring" Bike Race at our office in City Hall, Room 208, the Dobb's Nature Center or the Indiana State University Intermural Sports Office, Room 148 at the Arena. This event has two races--a one-mile for one to five speed bicycles and a five-mile for ten to twelve speed bicycles. The race is Sunday, April 21st at 1:00 p.m., beginning and ending at the Larrison Pavilion. Sign up today---The Race is FREE!

Community Affairs File

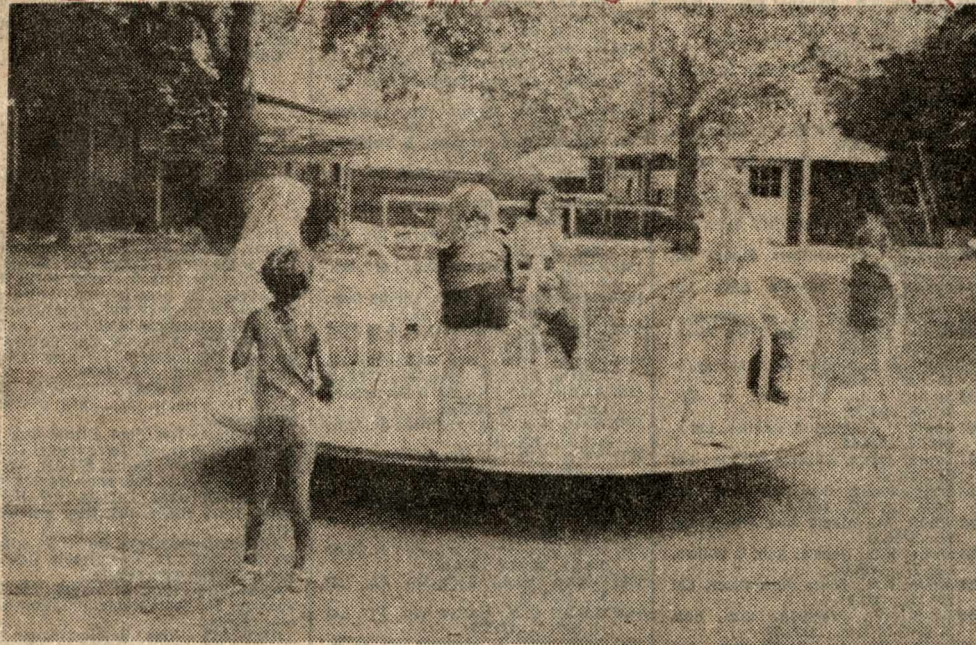
Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Curtis-Gilbert Park

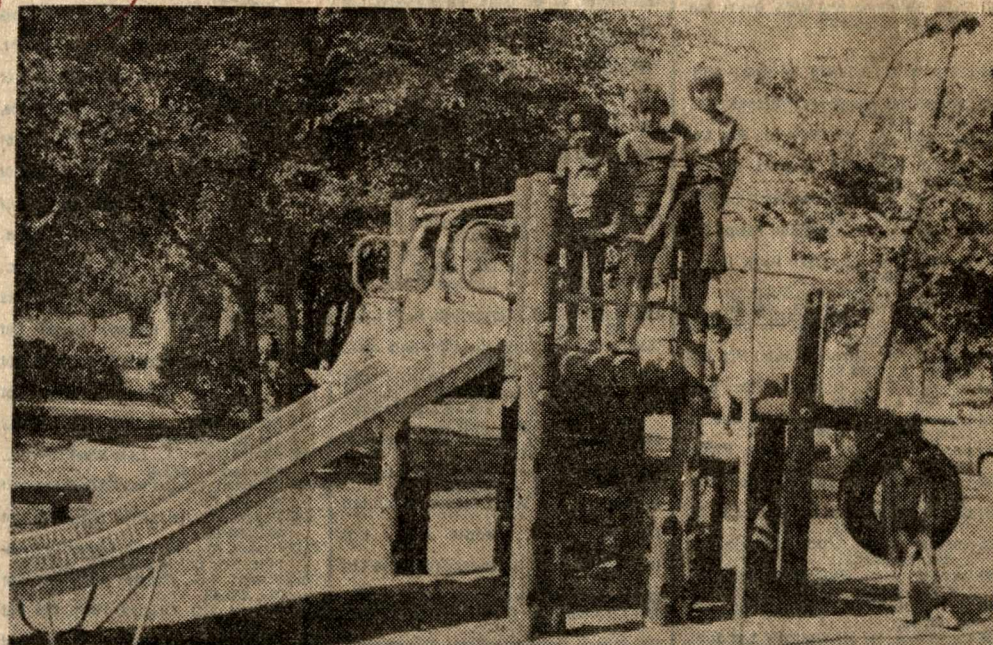
Gilbert Neighborhood Park

Star Monday July 18, 1977 Parks & Recreation (Vigo Co.)



COME JOIN US—IT'S FUN—Children here at Gilbert Park don't mind the heat, because they have some new playground equipment. The Terre Haute City Park Department installed several pieces of equipment at the central eastside park recently. Gilbert Park now offers playground equipment that allows the children to create their own type of fun. Many neighborhood parks are now equipped with new playground equipment, providing safe, clean fun for children of all ages.

(Star Photo: Kadel)



NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT—These children of the Gilbert Park neighborhood take a short time-out during their activities on this new creative piece of playground equipment. Several pieces of new equipment were recently installed in the neighborhood park and the children were quick to take advantage of them. This particular piece allows the child to climb, swing and slide.

(Star Photo: Kadel)

Community Affairs File

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

GILBERT / STEEG PARK

3/27/66



STEEG PARK

This is Steeg Park at the end of last summer, after the Scented Garden Committee had pruned and planted and successfully campaigned for new lights and sidewalks. A campaign is underway now to raise funds for further improvements.

T. H. Park KS

Steeg Park's Redevelopment

T. H. Trib-Star 3/27/66

Photos by Martin.

"It is the desire and aim of the Committee to develop this vital area of park along a main thoroughfare and U. S. Highway 40 through the city into an attractive landmark for tourists as well as an enjoyable and educational garden area for the citizens of our city."—Scented Garden Committee of Terre Haute.

About a year ago, a local woman was asked to visit Steeg Park and then decide if she would join a committee to improve it. She wasn't highly interested in the project, but she agreed to visit the small park on the central Eastside. She was surprised to find it a mess. And yet, many travelers stopped at the park to rest before continuing their journeys east and west. In the half-hour she spent there, cars from 14 states stopped.

Mrs. Kester Enders has been an active member of the Scented Garden Committee since. The work of the committee at Steeg Park last year—getting new lights and sidewalks—won a commendation from Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson as a worthy park of her "Beautify America" campaign.

In co-operation with the city park board, the committee wants to install a pool and fountain; to build a patio area with flowers and benches; to continue clean-up and replanting.

Much has been done. But, the committee believes much remains to be done. As a community project, funds for these improvements are being raised through private donations, and through the service clubs.

You can be a part of it. You may be helping to make friends for Terre Haute among those who stop amid the floral splendor of "new" Steeg Park.

I Gave! **\$4.00**
For the Development of
Steeg Park

NAME.....
Thank You, - The Scented Garden Committee

*Tickets Courtesy of
JAYCEES OF TERRE HAUTE, INC.*

YOUR CHANCE—This is the card now being carried by Rotarians and other community leaders in support of the Scented Garden Committee's efforts to bring "a bit of beauty to the heart of the city."

GILBERT / STEEG

Beautification Program Progresses at Steeg Park

T.H. Parks
T.H. Star 7/1/65

The major part of the beautification program under way at Steeg Park is expected to be finished by July 15, with only a few extra touches remaining to be added later, according to City Park Superintendent Don High.

High said the concrete footing for 15 new lights will be poured Thursday and the lights will be installed as soon as the footings have set. Electrical cable for the lights already has been buried and plans call for about 340 feet of new sidewalk to be poured as soon as work on the lights is completed. Very nearly the same amount of sidewalk space was poured about this time last year.

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A new drinking fountain will be installed at the corner of Gilbert and Wabash Avenues during the program and many flowers, trees and shrubs are in the planning.

Mrs. Guy Belzile, a prime mover of the program, said more than \$700 was spent on shrubs and trees alone last year. Mrs. Belzile said a large number of rose bushes, geraniums, and petunias have been planted this year.

The program originated almost two years ago when a group of interested citizens formed to better the reputation of Terre Haute by giving the city a "thing of beauty" for travelers to use and remember. After a study of the parks in the city, Steeg was selected.

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The park was subjected to close watch for a time, and it was noted that more than 700 out-of-state persons stopped at the park in May of last year to rest a bit, stretch, and ease the monotony of the road.

Mrs. Belzile said after this project is completed, the group would look into other parks in the area and continue the work as long as possible.

She said many groups and individuals in the city and general area have helped greatly, but donations as well as manual labor was still needed.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the program, in any way, may call Mrs. Belzile at L-8748, Mrs. A. K. Enders at H-7241 or Mrs. Harry Neale, C-1711.



THING OF BEAUTY—Persons involved in initiating a beautification program at Steeg Park, Fifteenth Street and Wabash Avenue, inspect one of 15 modern lights to be installed in the park. Standing, left to right, are Mrs. A. K. Enders; Don High, city park superintendent; William Fuller, A. K. Enders, Mrs. Guy Belzile, Robert Egan and Mrs. Harry Neale. (Photo by Strausburg)

T.H. Parks
T.H. Star 11/15/66

Benefit to Raise Funds For Gilbert Park Fountain

A special benefit to raise funds for a planned fountain at Gilbert Park is slated for 8 p.m. Saturday in Tilson Music Hall of the Tirey Memorial Union Building at Indiana State University.

So far, eight area acts have been scheduled for the variety show. All entertainers are donating their talents to help the Scented Garden Committee gain additional funds for the fountain project.

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Acts appearing will include Jackie Hughes, local vocalist who has among her many credits the lead role in last season's Community Theatre production of "Oklahoma" and appearances with the Lawrence Welk Orchestra; The Sweet Adelines, a local barbershop singing women's group, and Larry Crandall, male vocalist, who will appear soon in the Community Theater production of "South Pacific."

Also, P. J. Hanna and his ventriloquist, Nicky; Jack Brewer, local magician, who was a recent winner at the Indiana State Fair's Young America exhibition; Macahas, a rock and roll combo; the Florence Cizek Dancers, and a tumbling group from the Terre Haute Boys' Club.

Handling the emceeing chores will be disk jockeys Johnny Palmer, WBOW, and Joe Badger, WAAC. A third disk jockey from WTHI will also appear.

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All proceeds will go to the Scented Garden Committee whose work in beautifying Gilbert Park has drawn praise from the city of Terre Haute, Sen. Birch Bayh, Mrs. Lyndon Johnson, and numerous visitors to the city.

Plans call for the erection of a fountain in the center of the park, currently transversed by Gilbert Avenue. The committee has been working for nearly a year to raise the money, and Saturday night's benefit is expected to aid the fund considerably.

Tickets for the benefit may be purchased at \$1 each at the following locations: Conserva-

tory of Music, K Mart and Southland Shopping Centers; Henderson's Music Store; Record Rack; Paige's Music Store; The Pizza Barn, and The Pizza House.

GILBERT PARK
 STEGG

T.H. PARKS

By DICK SUTLIFF

Tribune Staff Writer

T.H. Trib. Staff 128/68

Cross-country travelers motoring along U. S. Highway 40 have noted with pleasure the many improvements which have been made over the past few years to Gilbert Park on the central east side.

While the park is relatively small (3.85 acres), it nevertheless gets more than its share of attention and use, both by out-of-state residents and those living in this area.

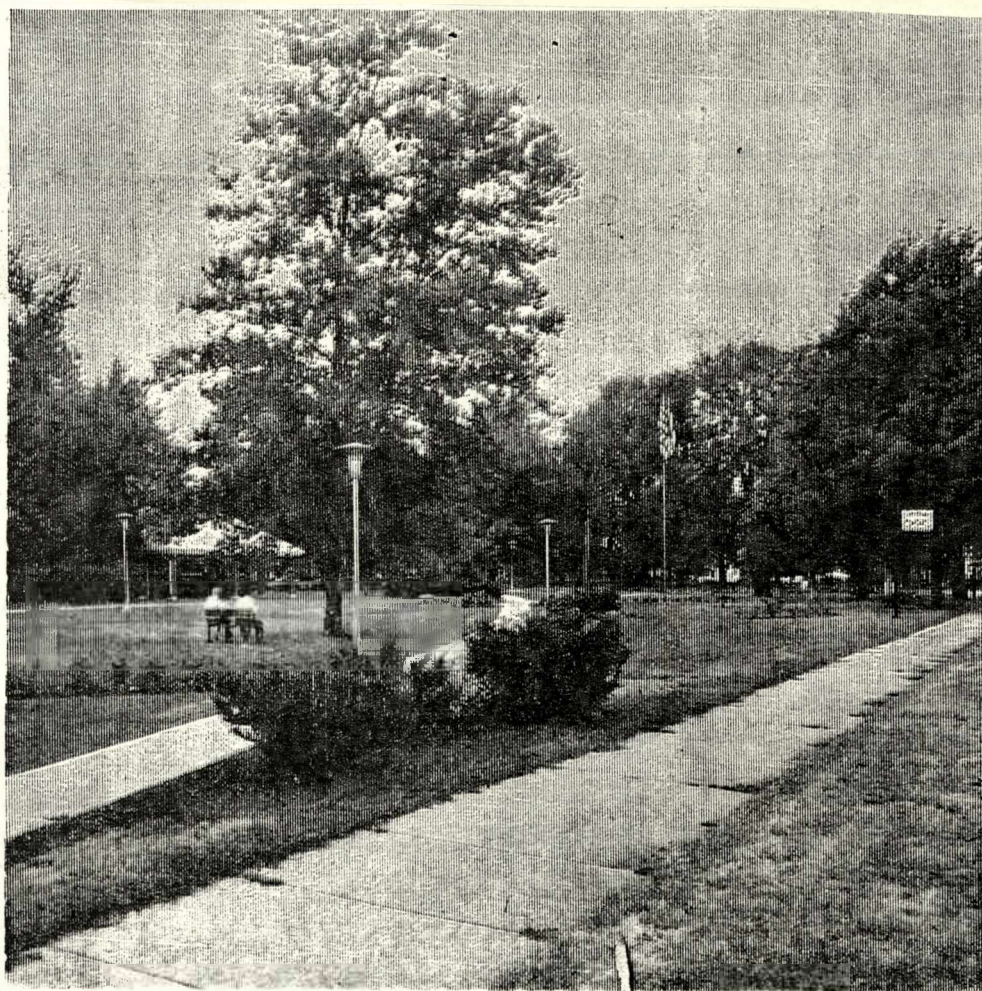
Gilbert Park and eight neighborhood parks in the city offer local residents spots where they may spend relatively peaceful hours without driving to one of the larger city parks.

There are picnic tables galore in Gilbert Park, and many local organizations conduct ice cream socials and other events which often attract several hundred persons.

The credit for the improvements made to Gilbert Park goes to the Scented Gardens Committee, a group of local residents who banded together to restore the park about five years ago.

Gilbert Park, located at 1431 Wabash Ave., was called Steeg Park up until a few years ago when the name was changed by action of the Terre Haute City Council.

The park was first named for Henry C. Steeg, major of Terre Haute from 1898 to 1904. The change to Gilbert Park was in memory of Curtis Gilbert, chief administrator of the city in 1839.



SCENE IN GILBERT PARK — Travelers motoring through Terre Haute often stop to eat and relax in Gilbert Park, located along Wabash Avenue at 14th Street. The Scented Gardens Committee backed a campaign a few years ago to beautify the park, and it now is one of the most attractive areas in the city park system. Chuck Strausburg Photo.

The Scented Gardens Committee was formed in 1963, and one of its first tasks was to obtain publicity for Gilbert Park and get community-backing for

improving its general appearance.

In co-operation with the administration of former Mayor Ralph Tucker, the committee saw to it that flowers were planted, new sidewalks laid and new lighting installed.

Praised By Lady Bird

The committee's efforts drew praise from President Johnson's wife, Lady Bird, who sent a letter to the committee commending it for working toward beautifying the park.

Several local florists contributed 500 varieties of blooming plants to the park. A host of roses, geraniums, petunias and other flowers also was set out.

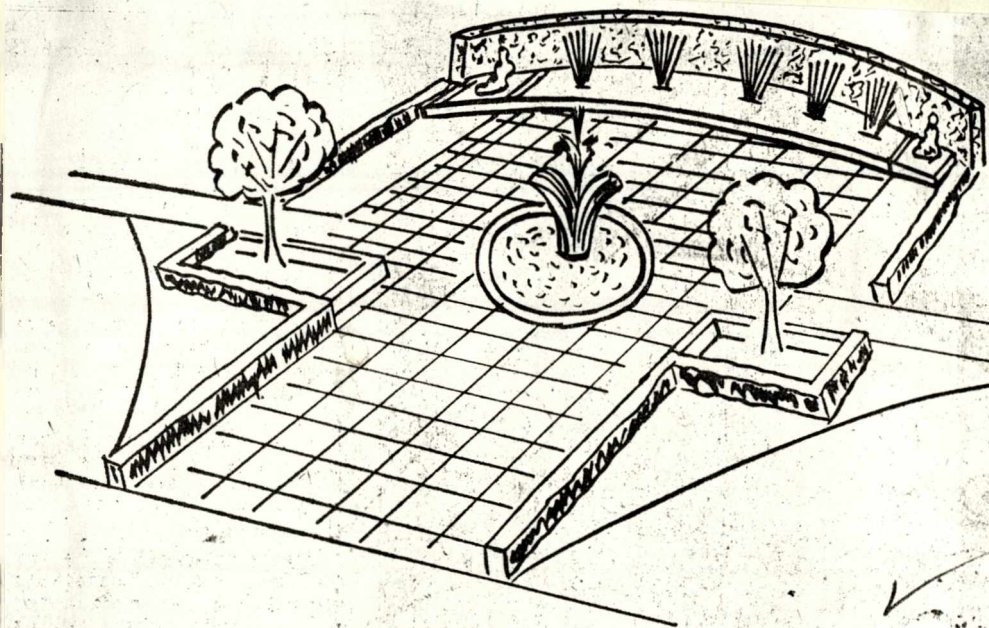
Action toward restoring Gilbert Park began after a survey showed ever-growing numbers of persons stopping to eat picnic lunches in the park as they traveled through the city.

It was felt that improving the park would help to give non-resident travelers a better impression of the city, thus raising the community's image across the nation.

Space prohibits mentioning all those who helped to improve the park, but two of the leaders were Mrs. Lucile Enders, now a park board member, and Mrs. Guy Belzile.

GILBERT PARK

GILBERT / STEEG PARK



PLANNED STEEG PARK PLAZA—Above is an artist's conception of Steeg Park Plaza after the extensive improvements planned by the Scented Garden Committee. Plans call for a three-tiered fountain in the center with five smaller sprays against a background of a foot high evergreen hedge. The area around the plaza will be cobblestoned and dotted with plantings. The committee is presently engaged in a fund-raising campaign to finance the planned improvements.

T.H. PARKS
T.H. STAR 3/24/66

Scented Garden Patrons Outline Park Plans

BY FRED NATION

Although spring is officially only three days old, a group of local citizens has been infected for the last several weeks with the peculiar "fever" associated with the season.

The persons are members of the Scented Garden Committee who have been busy with plans for extensive improvements to Steeg Park on East Wabash Avenue, which they have already made into a showplace of the central eastside.

The committee is currently conducting a fund-raising drive to finance purchase and installation of a three-tiered fountain in the center of the park.

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The fountain will have changing patterns plus colored lighting at night, according to Mrs. Guy Belzile, Scented Garden chairman. In addition to the main fountain, five smaller sprays against an evergreen background will frame the main spray.

The plaza area surrounding the fountain will be paved, with benches and planting areas provided. The whole project is estimated to cost about \$17,500 by Mrs. Belzile who points out the fountain, which would normally cost about \$40,000, is being obtained at wholesale.

Heading up the fund-raising project are co-chairmen Mrs. Russell Rink and Mrs. Harry Neale. Cards are being sold in several places of business scattered about the city. Also, members of the committee are willing to speak to civic and fraternal organizations about the eastside park.

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The Terre Haute Jaycees have donated the cards that are on sale signifying a donation to the fund drive. Mayor Ralph Tucker recently signed a proclamation signifying March 21-27 as Scented Garden Week in the city.

Members of the committee are hopeful the necessary funds can be raised in time to install the fountain for the city's sesquicentennial celebration in June. "We think we can do it if the community would get solidly behind us," says Mrs. Belzile.

Members of the committee are quick to point out the park beautification program is strictly non-political. Excellent co-operation has been obtained from Mayor Tucker and the City Park Department as well as many local citizens.

High has complimented the group on its efforts and expressed a wish other citizens would take a similar interest in the parks. "I think they have done a wonderful job," said High, "and I'm all for it."

The Scented Garden Committee was organized two years ago for the purpose of preparing and carrying out a landscape design for Steeg Park. The first step was to draw up a long-range improvement plan that was done by landscapist Harold Timmer.

Since the beginning notable progress has been made. Sixteen dead trees were removed and 400 feet of new sidewalk have been laid. Seventeen new light standards and new water pipes have been installed.

Hundreds of pounds of fertilizer were used to prepare flower beds for plantings. Various evergreens and flowers have been planted the last two years.

All together, Mrs. Belzile estimates more than \$1,000 of citizen's contributions have been expended on improvements to the park.

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This spring several types of bushes were planted, including Korean spicebush, mock orange,

hemlock, highbrush cranberry and pfitzer juniper.

Other improvements that have been added include a donated flagpole and fifty-star flag. Several local florists have donated rose bushes and other flowering plants.

Improvements slated by the Park Department for this year are additional sidewalks, remodeling of the restrooms and a new roof on the park building.

The Scented Garden Committee also hopes to erect a shelter for park visitors in the near future.

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The eastside park has become a favorite resting place for out-of-town visitors who have made several compliments on its appearance.

Contributions to the fund may be made at the following locations: Adam's Pontiac, Alden's Hosiery Department, Sears Roebuck office, Hornung and Hahn Shoe Store, Meadows Beauty Salon, Daniel Appliance Store, Paitson Hardware, Stewart-Carey Glass and Paint, Wolfe of Terre Haute, Schultz Depart-



SPRING BEAUTY has arrived at Gilbert Park on East Wabash Ave. after members of the Scented Garden Club committee spent several hours planting dahlias, geraniums, petunias and snapdragons. The planting session is part of the club's plan to make the park one of the more attractive

spots in the city. Serving on the committee are: Beverly Belzile, chairman; Harold Timmer, co-chairman; Lucille Enders, secretary; George Heck, treasurer, and members Sherry High, Hazel Fortson, Lonzo Jones, Kester Enders and R. Guy Belzile. Photo by Martin.

GILBERT/STEEG

Beautification Of Steeg Park Given Boost

Civic-minded individuals and businesses this week were adding another phase to the overall beautification of Steeg Park at 14th St. and Wabash Ave., a project undertaken more than a year ago by a group of citizens organized under the Scented Garden Committee.

The latest effort constitutes nearly 500 varieties of blooming plants donated by Henley Bros. Florists, College Avenue Nursery, Maryland Nursery and Bunch's Nursery, according to Mrs. Guy Belzele, committee co-chairman.

The plants were carefully bedded according to plans mapped by Harold Timmer of Bunch's with Mrs. Kester Enders, committee co-chairman, overseeing the entire operation. Also aiding with the planting was Mrs. Doris Pattison of Henley Bros.

Employed to do the spading, weeding, etc., were teen-agers John Hill and Donald Roehm, hired through YES (Youth Employment Service) set up at the Terre Haute office of the Indiana Employment Security Division by HELP (Housewives Effort for Local Progress).

The Scented Garden project was begun in November, 1963, and to date some \$1,300 worth of plants and labor have been donated, the park already showing marked results of the beautification program.

Committee officials paid tribute to the City Park Department which they said installed 15 new street lights "when 13 have been requested" and had also installed new sidewalks in the park.

Future committee plans call for an extensive promotion for the coming winter months aimed at acquainting the public with the merits and value of the program and to recruit added help of funds, labor and materials for Spring planting and installation of a new public drinking fountain in the park area.

Program Nearly Complete to Beautify Steeg Park

The program to beautify Steeg Park, sponsored by a group of local citizens largely will be completed by July 15, according to City Park Superintendent on High.

In 1963 a group of citizens joined together with the purpose of improving one of Terre Haute's city parks in order to give travelers moving through the city a "thing of beauty" to see and remember.

Now, almost two years later, their efforts in Steeg Park—chosen as the first target—are about to bear fruit. If plans progress on schedule, only finishing touches will remain after the 15th.

Electrical cable for 15 new

feet of new sidewalks will be installed soon, nearly equalling the amount laid last year, High said.

Install New Lights

The concrete footings for the lights was scheduled to be poured today, and the lights themselves will go in as soon as the footings have set.

Also scheduled to be installed is a new drinking fountain at the corner of Gilbert and Wabash Avenues and many flowers, trees and shrubs.

More than \$700 was spent on shrubs and trees last year, according to Mrs. Guy Belzile, one of the prime movers in the program. She added that a large number of rose bushes, geraniums, and petunias have also been planted in the last year.

Steeg Park was targeted for the group's efforts after a study in May of 1964 revealed that during that month, more than 700 out-of-state persons stopped at the park.

Mrs. Belzile said after this project is completed, the group would look into other parks in the area and continue the work as long as possible.

She said many groups and individuals in the city and general area have helped greatly, but donations as well as manual labor was still needed.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the program, in any way, may call Mrs. Belzile at L-8748, Mrs. A. K. Enders at H-7241 or Mrs. Harry Neale C-1711

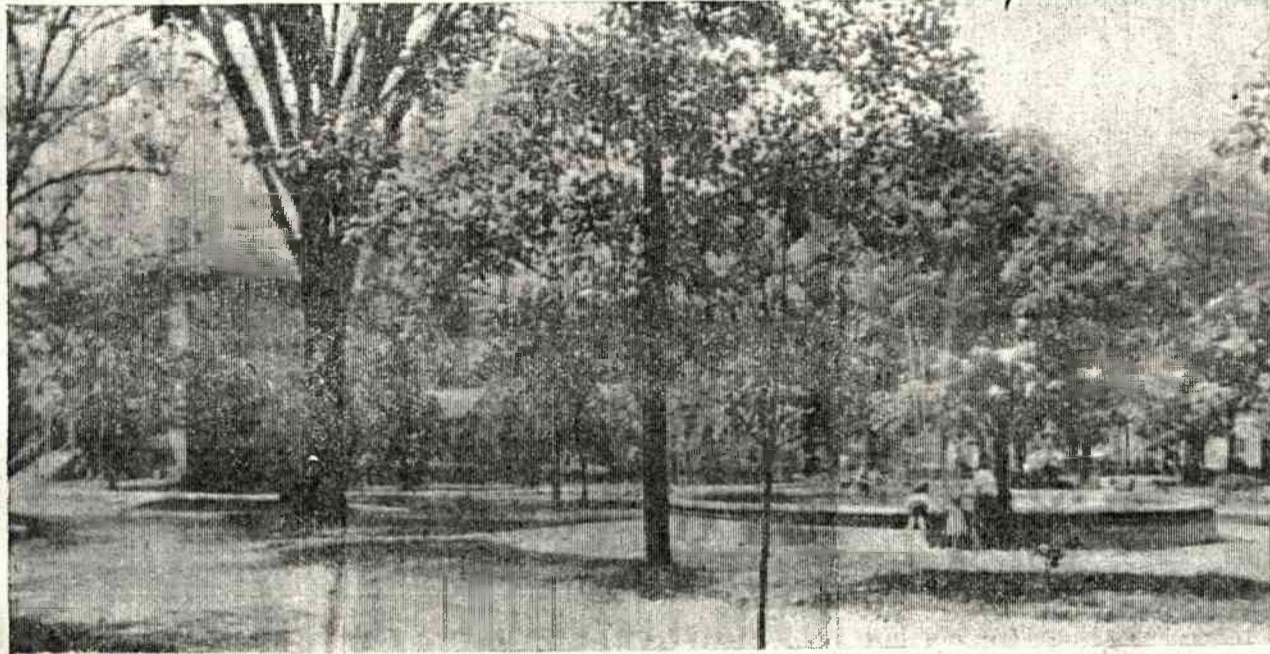


STEEG PARK "SCENTED GARDENS" BEAUTIFICATION CONTINUES—The work the Volunteer Scented Gardens Committee, begun more than a year ago relative to beautification of Steeg Park at 14th St. and Wabash Ave., is getting another prog step-up this week. Several hundred blooming plants, donated by Terre Haute florists nurseries, were planted and still further beautification features and promotion activi are planned for the coming months. From left are: Mrs. Kester Enders, committee chairman along with Mrs. Guy Belzile; Wayne Pattison, Tim Pattison, Mrs. Winifred] tison of Henley Bros. Florists, and John Hill and George Roehm, YES (Youth Emp ment Service) referred workers. Photo by Mar

Bayh Praises Scented Garden Project

T.H. PARKS

T.H. STAR 10/4/66



GILBERT PARK FOUNTAIN—This picture, published in a turn-of-the-century book, shows the first pool and fountain at Curtis Gilbert Park. Later, a more elaborate fountain was erected. Presently, members of the Scented Garden Com-

mittee are raising funds to construct a new fountain and plaza in the park. The house in the background belonged to Spencer F. Ball, prominent resident of early Terre Haute.

By FRED NATION

An effort by the Scented Garden Committee of Gilbert Park (formerly Steeg Park) to raise funds to build a fountain in the park has drawn commendation from Sen. Birch E. Bayh Jr.

In a letter to the local committee, Bayh expressed hope this worthwhile effort will be supported by the people of Terre Haute with the same vigor and determination that has enabled the park to become what it is today."

The committee, in co-operation with the Terre Haute Park Department, has made many improvements in the East Wabash Avenue park, including plantings of roses, shrubs and flowering plants.

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Presently, the committee is attempting to raise \$18,000 to construct a plaza and fountain in the center of the park

Bayh's letter cited the recent emphasis on restoring the quality of our environment and beau-

See SCENTED GARDEN
On Page 9, Column 2

Scented Garden

Continued From Page 1

tification of our surroundings. He pointed out the many government programs are attempting these tasks.

"However," Bayh said, "the success of this movement depends not on the activities of those in Washington, D. C., but on the work of thousands of private citizens and organizations throughout the country.

"One such group is the Scented Garden Committee. Under the skillful and dedicated leadership of Mrs. Guy Belzile and Harold N. Timmer, Gilbert Park has become one of the most beautiful parks in the Terre Haute area. It serves as a permanent testament closely linked to the inner prosperity of the human spirit."

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Bayh said he was "proud that my home town is working toward this goal because a more beautiful city is truly an impor-

tant expression of the character and temperament of its residents."

Recent work on Gilbert Park has included construction of a drinking fountain donated by the Terre Haute Lodge of B'Nai B'brith; new glass blocks in rest room windows and new sidewalks.

Donations for the fountain may be mailed to George Heck, care of Smith's Hardware Store, 301 Wabash Ave.

Curtis Gilbert, for whom the park is named, came to Vigo County as a postmaster at old Fort Harrison and later was elected first clerk of Vigo County.

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His home, located on the present site of the park, was on the fringes of Terre Haute at that time. Gilbert agreed to give the property from Gilbert Avenue to Fifteenth Street to the city for a park if the city would pave Wabash Avenue in front of his property.

Then, in 1930, Gilbert's heirs sold the property from Gilbert Avenue to Fourteenth Street to the city for \$25,000. Later, grandchildren of Gilbert gave both the land where the Gilbert house stood and land where the Spencer F. Ball House stood to the city to be added to the park.

It was first called Curtis Gilbert Park, but after the death of Mayor Henry Steeg, it was renamed Steeg Park. The Terre Haute City Council changed the name back to Gilbert Park on June 15, 1966.

Work Advances On Beautifying Of Steeg Park

The task of beautifying Steeg Park, Fourteenth Street and Wabash Ave., begun over a year and a half ago by interested persons and business firms, received another boost this week with the donation of several hundred blooming plants by local nurseries.

The Scented Garden Committee, formed in November, 1963, has to date solicited some \$1,300 worth of plants and labor in their efforts to improve the park's appearance.

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According to Mrs. Guy Belzele, project co-chairman, the latest donations include almost 500 plants of different varieties by Henley Bros. Florists, College Avenue Nursery, Maryland Nursery and Bunch's Nursery.

Harold Timmer of Bunch's, Mrs. Doris Pattison of Henley Bros. and Mrs. Kester Enders, committee co-chairman, oversaw the planting. Employed to do the spading and weeding were John Hill and Donald Roehm, hired through the Youth Employment Service (YES).

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Besides the floral additions, committee efforts have brought other improvements. The City Park Department recently installed 15 new street lights and new sidewalks in the park after committee requests.

The Scented Garden Committee hopes to continue its promotion activities through the winter months by acquainting the public with their program and recruiting additional funds, labor and materials for spring planting. The installation of a new drinking fountain also is planned.

Lady Bird Congratulates Steeg Park Committee

The Scented Garden Committee at Steeg Park has received a letter of appreciation and encouragement from Mrs. Lady Bird Johnson, wife of President Lyndon B. Johnson, concerning the committee's progressing efforts to beautify Terre Haute's only city park areas which is located on a national highway, U. S. Highway 40.

The White House communication was received in answer to the committee's appraisal to the capitol regarding the local aspect of the nationwide beautification effort, one of Mrs. Johnson's personal projects.

The letter to the committee secretary read as follows:

THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington,
July 10, 1965.

Dear Mrs. Enders:

Thank you for your good letter and encouraging support of efforts to beautify our cities and countryside.

I was delighted to learn of the Scented Garden Committee's project to enhance the appearance of the entrance to Terre Haute, for renewing and brightening the gateways to our cities.

is one of the many important things we can do to make them more attractive and inviting.

Only through the efforts and enthusiasm of dedicated people like you and your Committee will we be able to restore and preserve the beauty of our Nation, and I do hope that you will be able to encourage your fellow citizens to complete the

Scented Garden.

Thank you again for writing me of your interest.

Sincerely,
Lady Bird Johnson
Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson

The committee's efforts are centered on Steeg Park at 14th St. and Wabash Ave., where many beautiful blooming flowers have been planted, new sidewalks installed, new lighting fixtures erected and a general facelifting has been evident since early spring.

Scores of community-minded individuals, businesses, industries and organizations have contributed time, money and materials to the effort, which is expected to continue through the winter months and into next summer before the over-all beautification program is complete.

STEEG PARK LIKED BY BUSINESS MEN

TRIB - Star — 6-28-42

The "business" park of Terre Haute—better known as Steeg Park—which is located at Fourteenth street and Wabash avenue near the business district, is frequented mostly by business men.

The park, with ample playground facilities, also is well attended by the youngsters of the vicinity. Horseshoe courts also are a feature of Steeg Park, and afford visitors many hours of pastime. These courts all have been reconditioned and repaired, along with other improvements including repairing of playground equipment and trees trimmed and treated.

Many of Terre Haute's business men and women may be seen in their leisure hours during the hot summer months, reclining on a bench in some shady section of Steeg Park.

TRIB. MAY 18-66

the EDITOR'S MAIL

The Terre Haute Tribune welcomes letters from readers. The briefer they are the better the chance of publication. All are subject to condensation or rejection. All must be signed. The Tribune does not necessarily agree with statements made and does not assume responsibility.

Dear Editor:

In the past few days several residents of Terre Haute have been asked to sign a petition to be presented at the next city council meeting. This petition requests that the name of the city park located at 14th and Wabash—namely Steeg Park—be changed to Gilbert Park.

Granted that the descendants of Curtis Gilbert are justly proud of his pioneer efforts in early Terre Haute. As a political county office holder his signature naturally appears on most of the early documents in Vigo County.

At the end his third seven-year term as county clerk, he retired from public office to manage the extensive business properties he had acquired—the farm of 120 acres (part of which is the present Steeg Park), 280 acres just outside the city limits in Harrison Township, and 300 acres in Sugar Creek Township, as well as his original lot at Ohio and Water streets where he established the post office and courthouse.

During the last seven years of his life he chose to leave Terre Haute and make his home in Florida where he died in 1877.

Mayor Henry C. Steeg, a native son of Indiana, was born in Putnam County in 1857. His family was long and prominently identified with the business affairs of that community, having emigrated from Germany in 1829. Henry came to Terre Haute in 1885 and formed the successful firm of Reiman & Steeg. He was one of the originators of the People's Brewing Co., and later president. In 1888 he was elected to serve his district in the city council, and 10 years later in 1898 was chosen mayor. He was again elected in 1902 serving until 1904.

It was during his administration that the 14th & Wabash property came on the market and was acquired by the city for \$60,000. Later a small portion of the total 3.85 acres was donated by the Beach and Gilbert families.

It has been my observation that the original name sticks irregardless of how many changes are made later. Witness the name-changing of the Lincoln School—first to James Whitcomb Riley, and, when that proved confusing, to Benjamin Franklin School. Long-time residents still refer to this building as the old Lincoln School and always will!

Much serious thought went into the naming of Steeg Park, and those who would propose changing the name, which has been used for over 60 years, would find that residents would still call it Steeg Park for generations to come.

Wouldn't the Gilbert descendants be satisfied with calling the proposed new fountain planned for the center of the park the Gilbert Fountain? I hope so.

Sincerely yours,

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST.

REFERENCE
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VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Community Affairs File

Parks + Recreation
Vigo

Letters to the Editor

The Terre Haute Star welcomes letters from readers. The briefer they are the better the chances of publication. All are subject to condensation or rejection. All must be signed, but names will be omitted on request. The Star does not necessarily agree with statements made and does not assume responsibility.

To the Editor of The Star:

In the past few days several residents of Terre Haute have been asked to sign a petition to be presented at the next city council meeting. This petition requests that the name of the city park located at 14th and Wabash—namely Steeg Park—be changed to Gilbert Park.

Granted that the descendants of Curtis Gilbert are justly proud of his pioneer efforts in early Terre Haute. As a political county office holder his signature naturally appears on most of the early documents in Vigo County.

At the end of his third seven-year term as county clerk, he retired from public office to manage the extensive business properties he had acquired—the farm of 120 acres (part of which is the present Steeg Park), 280 acres just outside the city limits in Harrison Township, and 300 acres in Sugar Creek Township, as well as his original lot at Ohio and Water streets where he established the Post Office and Court House.

During the last seven years of his life he chose to leave Terre Haute and make his home in Florida where he died in 1877.

Mayor Henry C. Steeg, a native son of Indiana, was born in Putnam County in 1857. His family was long and prominently identified with the business affairs of that community, having emigrated from Germany in 1829. Henry came to Terre Haute in 1885 and formed the successful firm of Reiman & Steeg. He was one of the originators of the People's Brewing Co. and later president. In 1888 he was elected to serve his district in the city council, and ten years later in 1898 was chosen mayor. He was again elected in 1902, serving until 1904.

It was during his administra-

tion that the 14th and Wabash property came on the market and was acquired by the city for \$60,000. Later a small portion of the total 3.85 acres was donated by the Beach and Gilbert families.

It has been my observation that the original name sticks regardless of how many changes are made later. Witness the name-changing of the Lincoln School—first to James Whitcomb Riley, and when that proved confusing, to Benjamin Franklin School. Long-time residents still refer to this building as the old Lincoln School and always will!

Much serious thought went into the naming of Steeg Park, and those who would propose changing the name which has been used for over 60 years would find that residents would still call it Steeg Park for generations to come.

Wouldn't the Gilbert descendants be satisfied with calling the proposed new fountain planned for the center of the park the Gilbert Fountain? I hope so.

Sincerely yours,
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Community Affairs File

In Honor of Pioneer—

Suggest Renaming Steeg Park for Gilbert

With the Terre Haute sesquicentennial observance now paramount in the minds of most citizens of the city, and with the resultant delving into the city's history, a suggestion has been made to The Star in a "letter to the editor," that a change be made in the name of Steeg Park.

It is suggested that it be named Gilbert Park since it is located on the site of the former home of Curtis Gilbert, a pioneer citizen. Two of his granddaughters gave the city about half of the park, after the first half had been bought for the city to establish a park.

The park is located on the site of the front gardens of the Curtis Gilbert home. The letter follows:

To the Editor of The Star:

It is most gratifying to see that a group of people such as the Scented Gardens Committee is interested in beautifying

our city and particularly Steeg Park.

I think, now that the Sesquicentennial is upon us, it would be a good idea to change the name of that park to Gilbert Park since it is located on the site of the former home of Curtis Gilbert, a pioneer citizen who came here as a young man and did much to advance the growth of Terre Haute before his death at the age of 83.

Curtis Gilbert came to Fort Harrison in December 1815 and was commissioned first Postmaster in 1817. In October 1818, the Post Office at the Fort having been discontinued, under the direction of the Postmaster General he moved the effects to his home at Ohio and Water Streets which was the first frame building in Terre Haute. He was elected first Clerk and Recorder of Vigo County in 1818 which office he held for three terms, a total of 21

years. In 1824 he was elected a Trustee of the first recorded Board of the Public Library, took an active part in the organization of the Terre Haute Branch of the State Bank in 1834 and twice served as its President, and later organized and was a director of a new Branch Bank of the State. He was instrumental in procuring the act of the Legislature in 1837 providing for the drainage of Lost Creek, a much contended issue at the time, and in 1838, when the city of Terre Haute was incorporated, Mr. Gilbert was chosen one of the members of the Common Council and in 1839 was elected President of the Board and thus virtually became mayor, the office of mayor having been abolished as an elective office at that time. He was also president of the Western Plank Road which financed the building of the

section of the National Road through Vigo County.

He owned the National Road from the Putnam County line to the Illinois State Line. He organized Masonic Lodge No. 19, the first in Vigo County, in 1819 and his wife Mary Caroline Gilbert was a founder of the first Congregational Church in 1834.

In 1843 Mr. Gilbert gave up his town residence and moved out to his farm, The Grove, which extended from 13th to 19th Streets and from Wabash to Poplar. The family home, pictures of which have appeared in the newspaper in the past, faced Wabash Avenue and was located just south of the present Steeg Park Circle where Gilbert Avenue begins. In fact, the catalpa trees, some of which

See GILBERT
On Page 2, Column 1

Parks (Vigo)
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Community Affairs File

Gilbert

Continued From Page 1
still stand, were planted by him.

When the city bought some of the land from the Gilbert family, council records show that it was to have been named Gilbert Park; however, Mayor Steeg being in office at the time, it was decided to call it Steeg Park. Some years later Mrs. Spencer F. Ball and her sister Miss Mary Beach, granddaughters of Curtis Gilbert, gave the city the remaining portion of the land which makes up the park.

Descendants of this pioneer citizen have continued to live in Terre Haute and be active in community affairs. His only surviving grandchild lives here as do five-great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren. Another great-great-grandchild and his family are active members of a neighborhood community.

There is a precedent for naming Terre Haute parks for prominent people. Collett Park, Deming Park, Voorhees Park, Thompson Park, Spencer Ball Park are all examples of this and it seems particularly appropriate to name this park for Curtis Gilbert.

MRS. GRAHAM McMILLAN
96 Allendale Place
Terre Haute, Indiana

Gilbert PARK

T.H. PARKS
T.H. Star 5/19/66
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to the
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T.H. PARKS
the **EDITOR'S MAIL**
T.H. Trib. 5/20/66

The Terre Haute Tribune welcomes letters from readers. The briefer they are the better the chance of publication. All are subject to condensation or rejection. All must be signed. The Tribune does not necessarily agree with statements made and does not assume responsibility.

Dear Mr. Cox:

I am writing to correct a mistake in the "Letter to the Editor" published in the Tribune, May 18.

The anonymous letter writer states, regarding Curtis Gilbert, that "during the last seven years of his life he chose to leave Terre Haute and make his home in Florida where he died in 1877." This is not true. Curtis Gilbert never made his home in Florida.

Curtis Gilbert survived the devastating attacks of malaria that took the lives of so many of our Terre Haute pioneers, but the after effects of it plagued him for the rest of his life. As he grew older he found it increasingly difficult to withstand the rigors of an Indiana winter. In 1870, at the age of 75, he decided to go to a warmer climate for the winter months, and, taking a young daughter along as a companion, he went to Florida. This daughter met there a young man whom she married in 1872, and each winter thereafter until he died in 1877, her father spent the winter months with her and her family. Incidentally, it is not unusual for our present day Terre Haute citizens to desert their homes here for a warmer climate in the winter or a cooler one in the summer.

We have many letters written to his family in Terre Haute in which he complained of homesickness and expressed a longing for spring to come so he could return home. From early spring until the onset of cold weather in the fall he lived in his home that stood in what is now Steeg Park, participating in the life of the City and doing as much as a frail old man of eighty years was able to do.

As for her argument that changed names do not stick, but that people revert to the original name, I am reminded of the many streets, parks, and even a Cape that have been changed to Kennedy or Roosevelt, and I wonder whether anyone remembers that Hoover Dam was once "Boulder Dam. Does anyone call our Wabash Avenue "Main Street"?

Indiana State Normal School has undergone four changes in its name in my memory, and it is many years since I have heard that name or its successor "Indiana State Teachers College." Who, after only one year, calls the school anything except "Indiana State University"?

Finally, why an anonymous letter? The several hundred citizens, many of them prominent in the community, who have been interested in changing the name of the park did not hesitate to express their interest by signing their names to the petition to be presented to the Council.

Sincerely yours,
HELEN L. GILLUM

T.H. Trib. 4/14/66

the EDITOR'S MAIL

To the Editor: ~~T.H. Trib. 4/14/66~~ *Parks*

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MRS. GRAHAM McMILLAN
96 Allendale Place
Terre Haute, Indiana.

GILBERT / STEEG PARK



FUND DRIVE — The Scented Garden Committee has kicked-off its 1966 fund drive to continue the beautification of Steeg Park on East Wabash Avenue. Cards signifying contributions to the drive are currently on sale at several local stores and from members of the committee. Heading the drive are, seated, Mrs. Russell Rink, left, and Mrs. Harry Neale, right, co-chairman. Standing left is George Heck, treasurer of the group, and Dr. Lonzo Jones, adviser.

CURTIS
GILBERT
PARK

Parks and recreation (111)
Associations (111)
**Central Eastside group
gives money to help park**

Ts JUN 25 1985

By Kathy Gurchiek
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

Central Eastside Associates played Santa Claus to the city Parks Department recently, donating \$5,000 for improving Curtis Gilbert Park, park board members were told Tuesday.

The gift will be combined with \$25,000 in federal Community Development Block Grant funds to renovate the park at 16th Street and Wabash Avenue, city Parks and Cemeteries Superintendent Patrick R. Ralston said.

Federal funds will be used to install a new lighting system and construct a 2,500-square-foot concrete plaza, Ralston said. The organization's gift is earmarked for landscaping in fall and finishing restroom improvements, he added.

Members of the nearly half-century-old central-eastside group include the City of Terre Haute, Oakley Division, Indiana State University, American Cablevision and The Tribune-Star, president Eston "Bud" Perry said.

Park improvement funds came from club funds generated by annual \$100 membership fees, Perry said, adding that the group has 60-plus members.

The organization purchased radio equipment for city police motorcycles three years ago.

Other planned improvements at Gilbert Park include replacing discarded playground equipment with equipment from the old Turner Girls Club, 1107 S. Fourth St., which has been in storage since the city-owned building was auctioned in 1983.

That equipment, which had been on club property since 1976, will be reconditioned, Ralston said.